

The U.N. Security Council has given youth a tool for empowerment

With the December 2015 passage of [U.N. Security Council Resolution 2250](#) on the role of youth and peacebuilding, the international community sent a powerful message to young people around the world: “Your voice really matters a huge amount and your agenda has huge weight,” according to Michael Shipler, a regional director for Asia at the Washington-based NGO [Search for Common Ground](#).

Youth-led civil society groups around the world inspired the measure, partly in response to the effects of violent extremism on the young. The measure also underscores the positive role young people can play in transforming conflict.

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Resolution 2250 “marks a paradigm shift away from the idea that youth are the threat to stability, to the idea that youth can play a major, critical and fundamental role in bringing about peace and stability in their societies. Youth shouldn’t be seen as a risk, but rather as critical partners and active leaders in building peace,” Shipler said.

With the resolution, the Security Council established a clear legal mandate calling on governments to engage youth to support peacebuilding. Shipler noted that many countries already have ministries of youth and youth wings of political parties, so the resolution builds upon existing familiarity with youth activism.

“What we’re seeking to do with 2250 is to empower youth-led civil society groups and to create platforms for engagement for youth leaders who may be advocating on a whole range of issues, including those affecting marginalization or human rights violations. Some of these are the dynamics at the roots cause of conflict,” he said.

He added that youth-led civil society “is sometimes more able and willing to transcend some of the political constraints that the elder civil society has, and they can thereby address some of the root causes of conflict in a more direct way,” such as overcoming the marginalization of ethnic and religious minorities.

Because the measure is still relatively new and largely unknown, the emphasis right now is to spread awareness of it and help translate it into action in areas such as empowering young people to be more effective in advocating peacebuilding with local and national governments, donors and NGOs.

The U.N. has asked young people to share how they are working for conflict prevention and sustainable peace using the hashtag [#ACTon2250](#). Others, such as the [Nigeria Youth 4 Peace Initiative](#) are using the resolution to help coordinate the contributions of young peacebuilders in their country.

There is “a whole body of experience and evidence of where young people’s involvement in peacebuilding has resulted in improved stability and a reduction of violence,” Shipler said. Want to

get involved? The [toolkit](#) at this U.N. website can help you get started!
